

Toronto, December 17, 1849.

TO THE VESTRY-MEN OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES :

GENTLEMEN,—The Report of your Committee appointed to take steps for the re-building of your Parish Church, having, together with certain other documents, been printed and circulated for your consideration, I am induced to offer a few remarks upon such points referred to therein, with regard to which it is most desirable you should possess clear and accurate information,

The Report sets out by stating that "the Committee having advertised for plans and estimates of such a Church, as they thought, would be satisfactory to the congregation," certain plans were received from different Architects, of which those of Mr. Cumberland, Mr. Ostler, and Mr. Kivas Tully, "appeared to the Committee, upon the best judgment they could form," entitled to the first, second, and third prizes respectively.

The next paragraph announces that besides these designs, there was another sent in by Mr. Smith of Montreal, who, not intending to compete for any premium, did not confine himself to the description of building required by the advertisement, and as such "satisfactory to the congregation." "This plan," nevertheless, "recommended itself more strongly to the Committee than any of the others,"—that is to say, the Committee confesses to an error; they discover that their advertisement was for a description of building they did not desire to erect, and they *now* wish to adopt a design quite different in character from that for which they called! In fact, the Architects who complied with their advertisement for "a Church satisfactory to the congregation," are sent adrift to make way for one, who, unauthorised in such a course, proposes a Cathedral which "recommends itself to the Committee."

This design, it appears from Mr. Smith's estimate, will cost £15,350; or, with "certain curtailments and alterations," (a most indefinite and unsatisfactory description,) the reduced sum of £12,000. Now, Mr. Cumberland's plan, it is said, will cost £9,400 to prepare the edifice for the performance of Divine Service, and £14,200 inclusive of the full completion of the tower-spire, and other contemplated decorations; whilst the estimate of Mr. Smith (£15,350) does *not* include the cost of the spire and *I can discover no estimate whatever of the total cost of his structure.* "It will be seen," says the Report a little further on, "that a Church built according to Mr. Smith's design will be the more expensive of the two—*though the difference will not be great.*" How has the Committee arrived at this conclusion? If a full estimate has been rendered by Mr. Smith, (which, as men of business, it is natural to suppose they have required,) why not let us have it? And if no such estimate has been made, how can the Committee suggest, or how are we to know, what the difference will be? But take the next paragraph, wherein the Committee recommends the adoption of Mr. Smith's design, "leaving it to the judgment and consideration of the Building Committee, in conjunction with the Architect, to modify details as may seem expedient, especially with reference to the materials to be employed, and the internal arrangement." In plain words, we are asked to adopt this design, and to give Mr. Smith and the Building Committee *carte blanche* in respect to the whole affair. But if a satisfactory internal arrangement is not now exhibited in this design, what induces the Committee to recommend it?—upon what have they formed their judgment? and what guarantee shall we have that a Church will be erected "satisfactory to the congregation?" On the other hand, if the internal arrangement really does "recommend itself to the Committee," why ask for such unlimited and indefinite powers, with a view to "*certain alterations?*" And again, if "the materials to be used" have not been determined upon, how in the world has the estimate been framed, and what confidence can we have in its accuracy? I confess I am not satisfied with this portion of the Report, displaying, as it clearly does, much inconsistency, and implying great doubt as to the propriety of the design which it recommends.

But let us enquire what the probability really is, as to the comparative cost of these two designs; let us see upon what grounds the Committee assert that the "*difference will not be great;*" and to this end let us compare their leading dimensions, as the most reasonable method (in the absence of professional advice,) of arriving at a fair conclusion; for if we admit that which apparently is not the case, namely, that Mr. Smith's design is no more expensive in decoration than Mr. Cumberland's, then the areas of the building will give us a pretty accurate idea of the comparative expense. The comparison may thus be made:—

EXTERNAL.

	Mr. Smith.	Mr. Cumberland.	Excess.
Extreme length,	245	185	60
" width at Transepts,	162	126	36

INTERNAL.

Length of Chancel,	40	26	14
" Nave,	146	108	38
Extreme length,	186	134	52
Width of Nave,	74	72	2
" at Transepts,	178	112	26
Total area of ground covered,	25,283 square feet.	16,484 sq. feet.	8,799 square feet.

Here then, we see that the area of ground to be covered by one design is 8,799 feet greater than that to be covered by the other; that the total length of Mr. Smith's design is 60 feet in excess of that by Mr. Cumberland, and its width also in excess to the amount of 36 feet! Beyond this, however, it will be seen, upon an examination of the drawings, that whilst in the smaller Church no basement is inserted, except such as is necessary for the heating apparatus, in the larger the whole basement area is opened, and the Church floor carried *throughout* on iron columns and brick arches! In the face of all this, the Report asserts, with what judgment it is needless to suggest, that "*the difference of cost will not be great*." There are many other items which might have strengthened the result of the foregoing comparison, but perhaps the most simple and conclusive point is this: that Mr. Smith's Church would be only 15 feet less in length than the site appropriated, being 45 feet longer than the Roman Catholic Cathedral, whilst the nave of Mr. Cumberland's would be only 5 feet longer than the old St. James' Church! and the most distant pew would be 12 feet nearer to the pulpit than it was in the building destroyed! Truly, Architects might rejoice if the Committee would condescend to *prove* the problem they have published, namely, that the cost of a structure varies with the size in an inverse ratio!—that the more you build, the less you spend! It appears to me that the true meaning of this paragraph, "*the difference will not be great*"—might have been more appositely expressed by the more vulgar saying of "*in for a penny in for a pound*,"—language generally understood to indicate the rash plunge of the reckless spendthrift.

The Report next proceeds to consider the ways and means; and by certain provisions therein set forth, the sum of £10,323 16s. 3d. would appear to be at disposal, *exclusive of any leasing of land*. Now, the advertisements of the Committee specially declared that the sum of £10,000 was to provide for the completion of so much of the Church as was necessary for the performance of Divine Service; and the three premium designs were prepared with that view, as the estimates accompanying them exhibit. Where then is the difficulty? Either of your prize designs (and you were free to choose *either*, although the Committee have been almost silent as to those of Mr. Ostler and Mr. Tully) for "*a Church satisfactory to the congregation*," may be erected, so far as is necessary for the performance of Divine Service, for less than this very sum of £10,323 16s. 3d. set forth in the Report of your Committee. Your immediate requirements may thus be attained; and having once established Divine Service, can you doubt but that the structure may be gradually finished by voluntary contributions, and thus the land be preserved? To doubt this, would be to doubt the zeal and piety of the members of the Church, and the activity and influence of her Clergy. But the Committee having recommended the adoption of the more costly design, involving an expenditure of £15,350 for the preparation of the building for Divine Service, and with reference to the total cost of which they have observed a profound silence, they find it necessary also to recommend the "*leasing of such portion of the land as may be necessary*" to meet an *indefinite outlay*! To this course there are many strong and conscientious objections; and I would suggest that the opinion of His Lordship the Bishop and of the Rector be taken by the Vestry, as to the intention and validity of the Consecration Service, that we may learn from those who are best capable of judging, and whose opinions we regard with respect, whether that Service is or is not binding upon Churchmen, to be received and acknowledged by them as a holy ordinance; or whether it is permissible in them to treat it as a mere idle ceremony, to be observed or disregarded as may be convenient. If that service is a fiction, and is so declared by the acknowledged voices of the Church, *expunge it*, for it is absolute hypocrisy to indulge in a form which, holding no authority, demands no respect. If it is *not* a fiction, (and who will say that the Bishop of Quebec thought it so, when in 1826 he performed it here?) then will no good Churchman wish or dare to alienate one inch of ground consecrated not alone by this service of the Church, but consecrated and endeared by the dust of those who died in the faith. Let all men be careful how they bring one service of the Church into contempt, lest the way being opened, doubt overshadow the remainder.

It will be seen then from the foregoing, that the leasing of the land (whether right or wrong by the laws of the Church) is not *absolutely necessary*: nor does even the report of your Committee state that it is so. It is simply a matter of choice. Four designs are submitted to you, three of which are for "a Church satisfactory to the congregation," the fourth for "a Cathedral of the Diocese." The former propose an expenditure of £10,000, the latter of £15,000, for such portions respectively as are necessary for the performance of Divine Service. If you are content to erect *either* of the three Church designs and to abide by the terms stated in the Report as necessary for the provision of the £10,323 therein mentioned, you can preserve the land and escape debt. If, on the other hand, you are *not* so disposed, then recourse must (it is said) be had to the leasing of the land that you may construct a Cathedral. In a matter involving such deep responsibility it should be clearly understood that in perpetrating this infraction of the laws of the Church, no man can excuse himself by the plea of necessity: for the case is simply this, practise economy or rush recklessly into expense:—give freely according to your ability, or join in the spoliation of that which, being consecrated, is not yours to use.

Nor, indeed, can I understand, how, even if you pursue this latter and most objectionable course, the Parish Church of St. James can be expanded in its service to the Cathedral of the Diocese. A Deacon ordained but yesterday would instruct you otherwise, for no Cathedral can be founded without an express warrant from the Archbishop of the Province to the Bishop of the Diocese. Has this been procured? On the contrary, it is well understood that no such document exists or has been asked for. Again, is the Diocese prepared to appoint and support a Dean, Canons, Minor Canons, Lay Clerks, and all the usual Establishment? Or, wanting these, are the Parochial Clergy prepared to perform the proper and regulated services? *I doubt it.* But we are told by the Report that "The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge" has granted the munificent sum of £1,000 on condition that it be expended in aid of the erection of "the Cathedral Church of the Diocese," which condition, it is said, his Lordship [the Bishop] would consider the plan of "Mr. Smith would sufficiently comply with." *Sufficiently* comply? Can Mr. Smith, the Committee, or (and I say it in all possible respect) his Lordship, erect the Parish Church of St. James into the Cathedral of the Diocese? Will the disposition of a Pinnacle, the form of a Chancel, or the length of a Transept affect that change? Undoubtedly not—and if not, then the Vestry desiring to deal openly and honestly with that generous Society will hesitate in accepting £1000 given under an evident misapprehension; for if the Vestry accept the gift, the money will, without the shadow of a doubt, be expended on the *Parish Church*, a use which on further reference, might not "sufficiently comply" with the condition laid down by that liberal body. Custom may have led us to adopt, and indeed may still lead us to perpetuate the name "Cathedral"—but custom is oftentimes, as in this case, no better than ancient error. Ours has been, is and will be a Parish Church; favoured certainly above all others in the Diocese, by the presence of the Bishop and the erection of his throne within its walls, but no less a Parish Church, and no more a Cathedral.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

